POLITICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL

SPECULATIONS

ON THE

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

OF THE

PRESENT CENTURY;

AND

On the STATE of LEGISLATION, MILITARY ESTABLISHMENTS, FINANCES, and COMMERCE, in EUROPE:

WITH

OCCASIONAL REFLECTIONS

On the PROBABLE EFFECTS of

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCY.

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Late of the Parliament of PARIS.

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THE following Work is a part of the *Annales Politiques, Civiles et Literaires du 18ieme Siecle*, written by the celebrated Mr. Linguet. It is difficult to preſerve, in a Tranſlation, the ſpirit of the Original; but the Publiſher flatters himſelf, that the many new ideas contained in this performance, will render it intereſting to the Engliſh Reader.

POLITICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL

SPECULATIONS, &c.

THE preſent century has already given birth to a variety of unforeſeen and ſingular events of every kind. The minority of Lewis the XVth. devoted to a ſeries of ruinous Speculations which were ſo much felt throughout the remainder of his reign; the creation of Ruſſia, if we may be

allowed the expreſſion, by a legiſlator who may himſelf be ſaid to have ariſen ſelf created, and the revolutions which in later years have at different times ſhaken its throne without impeding its progreſs to improvement; the ſudden elevation of Pruſſia, and the ſucceſs with which an Elector of Brandenburgh has ſupported a ſhock which was ſo fatal to Lewis the XIVth; the formation of a new Imperial houſe, amidſt a ſeries of wars undertaken with a view to deſtroy it; the reconciliation of the two houſes of Bourbon and Auſtria; the ſuppreſſion of the Jeſuits, which

which in whatever light we view it, ſeems to merit a place amongſt the remarkable events of the preſent century; the humiliation of Poland, and the partition of ten of its provinces, undertaken with the greateſt tranquillity by three neighbouring powers, and viewed ſeemingly with an eye of indifference by the reſt of Europe; laſtly, the revolt of the Americans, and their pretenſions to independency: all theſe will be ſo many objects calculated to excite the wonder of poſterity. But before we attempt to ſpeculate on the effects which theſe events

may be expected to produce, let us inquire into the ſtate of the world at the very moment in which we are writing.

Beginning with *Europe*, we ſee *France* in a ſtate of humiliation from a ſeries of external loſſes and diſaſters; and tormented within by that kind of fatigue which is inſeparable from great exertions; preſerving its weight in the balance of Europe, rather from the conſideration ariſing from its extenſive domains, than from its having any claims to the title of a great power; loaded

loaded with an immenſe national debt, which is every day accumulating, and becoming more and more an obſtacle to the reſources which an able miniſter might hope to meet with in that kingdom; the chief of theſe reſources are, perhaps, to be ſought for in the youth and tractable diſpoſition of the Sovereign;

England, no ſooner ariſen to the meridian of glory and power, than it begins to experience the ills that reſult from them; overwhelmed, as it were, by its greatneſs and conqueſts; expoſed

to all the horrors of a civil war, under a prince who is univerſally admired for the natural lenity of his temper; and to the ravages of luxury, notwithſtanding the pattern of ſimplicity which this ſame prince exhibits to his ſubjects; neceſſitated, whatever may be the ſucceſs of the American war, to ſee from the preſent hour in her children only ſo many inexorable enemies or redoubtable ſlaves; paying, by the moſt enormous taxes for the honour of holding the firſt rank in Europe, and by the loſs of its morals, for that of being the repoſitory of

almoſt

almoſt all the gold of the globe; enjoying however, notwithſtanding the inconceivable riches of individuals, only of an imaginary national wealth; a wealth, which may in one moment be deſtroyed, and leave to its poſſeſſors only the melancholy feelings of regret, corruption, civil animoſities and deſpotiſm;

Italy, reduced to nothing, or at leaſt to the enjoyment of a delicious climate and the reliques of its ancient magnificence, under a government which owes its preſent weakneſs to the lenity it has ſo long adopted;

Spain, affording only a great name and the ſhadow of its former power; a ſhadow which is ſtill ſpread over a greater portion of the globe than was ever under the dominion of the Cæſars, but which will ſoon give way to the influence of liberty if the Americans ſhould preſerve it;

Germany, on the eve of a revolution which for more than three centuries has taken place around it, and labouring to accelerate the moment in which its preſent foedal ſtate will

give

give way to an abſolute monarchy, under which its princes will be conſidered only as *peers* of the Imperial court, or as its *chaplains*;

Sweden, juſt delivered from an ariſtocracy, which, like all ariſtocratic governments was humiliating and deſpotic; and ſeeking for protection in the abſolute authority of one man againſt the inconveniences of limited and divided power, it being better at any rate to be under one tyrant than many;

Poland,

Poland, imbibing from its wounds a principle of activity, which will perhaps bring with it more real ſtrength than it ever derived from its ſtate of ſeeming ſecurity; and waiting only for an hereditary ſovereign to aſtoniſh, perhaps to terrify its neighbours, and to avenge itſelf one day or other, at their expence, for the humiliation into which it ſeems juſt now to be fallen;

Pruſſia and *Ruſſia*, riſing ſtates, exhibiting, like Hercules from the cradle, a degree of ſtrength, which is ſeldom to be met with in infancy, and having

to

to fear only from the premature vigor they ſeem to announce, and which cannot fail to excite the jealouſy and envy of their neighbours. The latter of theſe, *Ruſſia*, affords us a very extraordinary view of four ſucceſſive female ſovereigns, all of them glorious, and more eſpecially the reigning Empreſs. A proof this, that the Salic laws are as abſurd as they are unjuſt. The talents for adminiſtration may be common to both ſexes; and councils and ſupport being eſſentially neceſſary to ſo elevated a ſtation, a female ſovereign will naturally ſeek for them in the

the oppoſite ſex. Every throne there-
fore from which women are excluded,
will be influenced by their intrigues,
whereas thoſe to which they have a
right of ſucceſſion will be ſupported by
men: but with this eſſential difference,
that the favorite to whom the male
crown chances to be ſubjected, having
ariſen to this aſcendency through the
channel of vice and intrigue, and being
tempted by the uncertainty of her ſitu-
ation to be rapid in her acquiſitions,
never fails to diſgrace the reign in
which ſhe governs: whereas, a woman
who is conſecrated by the royal unc-
tion,

tion, is directed by nobler views; conſcious of the legitimacy of her elevation ſhe derives from it a dignity of ſentiment; and her own perſonal intereſt attaches her to the intereſt of her ſubjects. She enjoys more feelingly, and perhaps better, than a man would do, the glory ſhe derives to herſelf and the nation, becauſe leſs was expected from her. In ſhort, the taſte of her ſex for great things, and the idea of its weakneſs, render her ſo much the more ſtudious to diſtinguiſh and countenance merit.

If from *Europe* we paſs on to *Aſia*, we ſhall find the Turks cheriſhing the deſire of revenge, and this revenge they will, perhaps, one day or other be enabled to ſatiate if ſome experienced miniſter ſhould be called in, capable of giving ſtability to a machine of ſuch immenſity as the Ottoman empire.

Perſia, during the laſt fifty years has been devoted to a ſeries of convulſions, altogether ſimilar to thoſe which diſgraced the latter ages of the Roman empire;

empire; but we now ſee it reſuming under a ſecond *Thamas*, a degree of ſtrength, which the Lords of the two *Romes* were never able to recover after they had once loſt it.

We ſhall find *Indoſtan*, and all the vaſt peninſula of the Indies, in a ſtate of devaſtation not ſo much from war as from piracy. It is a melancholy truth, that the Europeans who uſurp not only the commerce but the territory of the Eaſt, have acquired them by rapine and cruelty, and by all the iniquitous acts that avarice and ambi-

tion

tion can inſpire. It is impoſſible to read the hiſtory of their tranſactions without ſhuddering.

We ſhall find that *Aſia* in general, which in earlier days was the ſeat of the arts, and the ſource of the luxury and magnificence and corruption of the maſters of the world, is in theſe times ſubmitted to a yoke, which, tho' leſs brilliant, is leſs burthenſome than its former one; we ſee it indeed laid waſte by inteſtine troubles, but theſe are tranſitory; the mildneſs of its govern-

government *, the fertility of its ſoil, and the wants of ſtrangers are ſo many means by which it may recover its former ſplendor.

With reſpect to *Africa*, it ſeems to be no longer conſidered in the political ſyſtem of the world, although ſome part of its ſhores are ſtill reeking with Chriſtian blood, and reſounding the ſhouts of victory. Inhabited by a race of barbarians, all the purpoſes it ſerves may be included in its

* See *La Theorie des Loix*, publiſhed by Mr. Linguet.

ſupplying pernicious treaſures to Europe, and ſlaves for American cultivation.

The philoſopher cannot fail to obſerve, that this centre of the globe is at once inhabited by the vileſt of men and the moſt ferocious of animals; as if Nature had aimed at fortifying its inhabitants againſt the inclination ſhe has given them to ſlavery, by placing them under the ſame ſky with the lion; or, perhaps, under this emblem, ſhe meant to delineate the deſpotiſm to which

which theſe unhappy countries were to be devoted *.

In ſhort, let us proceed to the Weſtern Hemiſphere and obſerve *America*. We ſhall find it ſubmitted throughout the whole of its extent to principles which are no leſs extraordinary than its productions; we ſee it diſtinguiſhed, as it were, into two portions, each of which affords a very different aſpect; one of theſe is groaning under all the

* I am far from confounding the African governments with thoſe of Aſia. My opinion on this ſubject will be ſeen, at large, in my *Theorie des Loix*.

ills which accompany ſuperſtition and opulence; whilſt the other, guided by the lights of philoſophy, is led on to civil war, and is claiming an independency, which will, perhaps, be no leſs fatal to herſelf than to the reſt of Europe.

The fate of the American colonies being now ſubmitted to the deciſion of arms, it would be to no purpoſe to inveſtigate the juſtice of their claims to independency. But I could wiſh to inquire of politicians in either Hemiſphere, whether they have ſeriouſly reflected on all the effects which ſuch an independency may be expected to produce.

In

In the firſt place, will not the ſucceſs of the Americans be an endleſs ſource of diviſions amongſt themſelves? From what we know of the human mind, ambition and a love of power will ſoon begin to actuate the operations of the congreſs and provincial aſſemblies. In all Ariſtocratic governments there is more of the parade, but perhaps leſs of the reality of patriotiſm than under an abſolute Monarch. The example of ſeven little provinces near the *Zuiderzee*, which have preſerved unity after ſucceſs, and

freedom notwithſtanding their wealth, is by no means applicable to the vaſt and almoſt boundleſs extent of the American colonies. Holland, deriving not only the luxuries but even the neceſſaries of life from other countries, would ſeem to be reſtrained from corruption by the frugal hand of Nature herſelf; but this is not the caſe with America: nor have the Americans the ſame motives to a revolt that formerly influenced the Dutch, who were groaning under the moſt oppreſſive tyranny. Nor will they, like the Dutch, be able to maintain one com-

mon

mon intereſt and an unity of plans and operations; but will find a thouſand objects for rivalſhip ariſing the moment their independency becomes acknowledged, and their commerce free and uninterrupted. In ſhort, without having had occaſion for, or perhaps without producing a *Brutus*, they will ſoon meet with a *Cæſar*, and will then feelingly regret under the weight of a national deſpotiſm, the yoke of a diſtant government which had ſtrength ſufficient to protect, though it was too weak to oppreſs them.

In the next place, the firſt manœvre of the Americans as independent ſtates, will be to open an aſylum to Europeans; and this will be an endleſs ſource of emigration from the old to the new world. The crowd of active and reſtleſs minds, whom the hopes of a better fortune, and the dawn of liberty in a riſing ſtate, may attract to the Weſtern Hemiſphere, will not fail to multiply the ſeeds of diſorder there; they will carry with them their vices, their avidity, their averſion to repoſe as well as to uſeful labor, and their facility

facility to adopt new projects. In ſhort, they will be found to afford more accomplices to the ambition of a tyrant, than uſeful promoters of agriculture and commerce.

But this is not all. It is well known how baneful ſuch tranſplantations are to the generation which experiences them; and they will be more eſpecially ſo in America, where cultivation is already extended over the beſt and moſt fertile parts of the continent. The new comers will be admitted only to the refuſe of the ancient

cient inhabitants, and of courſe will be obliged to take up their abode on ſome unfruitful ſoil, or in thoſe ſwamps which are ſo fatal to the ſtranger. And here the emigrants, weakened by a change of nouriſhment and climate, and oppreſſed by penury and diſeaſe, will ſoon be rendered odious by their complaints, and ſuſpicious by their murmurings, till at length they will ſicken and die, lamenting the error that drew them to ſo inhoſpitable a ſhore. Their poſterity will probably be few in number, ſo that although Europe will have loſt, America will be hardly ſaid to

have

have gained them; and the former being in this manner evacuated, and having conſtantly thoſe fiſcal charges to ſupport, with which the preceding reigns will not have failed to load their poſterity, the contributions muſt neceſſarily be increaſed in proportion as the number of contributors is diminiſhed; and who knows to what cataſtrophes this unfortunate remnant may be reduced by an exceſs of miſery and oppreſſion?

Suppoſing however theſe Speculations to be ill founded, and that the

new

new world ſhould be able to procure from its own ſtock a population, which ſhall not materially affect the reſt of the univerſe, ſtill it muſt be acknowledged, that America, when well peopled, will no longer have any occaſion for the productions or aſſiſtance of Europe. Its climate, modified even in its rudeſt parts by the hand of labour, and rendered profitable in others by an induſtrious cultivation, will ſoon enable it to diſpenſe with the dangerous and fatiguing commerce of our ſeas. Its inhabitants, ſurrounded by ſeas which abound with fiſh; maſters

of

of the richeſt mines; in the neighbourhood of the Weſt Indies; and performing in two months, with winds that are conſtantly in their favor, voyages which are always tedious, and very often dangerous, to European ſhips; receiving without trouble, and without danger, on the one hand ſugar, indigo, and the moſt delicious fruits; and on the other ſpices, precious ſtones, and fine linen; and thus drawing to them the riches and luxuries of the two Hemiſpheres, will ſoon become the maſters of our deſtiny.

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It will be then from the neceſſity of things that we ſhall depend on them, more than ever they depended on us, through the rage, or if you will, the wiſdom of our prohibitive laws. It will be no longer by *Cairo* or the *Cape of Good Hope*, that we ſhall procure the treaſures of *Africa*, or the perfumed productions of *Aſia*; but from factories eſtabliſhed in the ſeas of *America*—And alas! what return ſhall we be able to make for theſe things to the Lords of *Brazil*, and the proprietors of *Peru*?

But

But their abounding with gold and diamonds will be far from conſtituting the whole of their ſuperiority over us; they will add to theſe, all the powers which ſtates, as well as individuals, derive from the vigor of youth and a conſcioufneſs of proſperity. Their ſplendor being the effect of a rapid revolution; and not having paſſed through the ſlow and almoſt imperceptible gradations which have marked the riſe of other nations, they will find themſelves on a ſudden in the full poſſeſſion of maturity, and this, with all the

the energy of a youthful conſtitution. Even their inteſtine diviſions will perhaps have the ſalutary effect of preventing the too ſpeedy progreſs of corruption amongſt them.

Then, they will ſoon aim at cruſhing the languid powers of Europe: they will come to aſtoniſh and conquer their confuſed metropolis, deploring in indigent old age the ingratitude of her children; or if they ſhould not deign to avenge the evils ſhe occaſioned to their predeceſſors, ſhe will owe her ſafety to her weakneſs. She will

will not be conquered by them becauſe ſhe will be no longer an object worthy of ſubjection. The rude and barbarous ſtate into which ſhe will be fallen, will ſerve only to diſguſt the poſſeſſors of the moſt brilliant Empire the art of politics has as yet given birth to.

The time of ſuch a revolution is uncertain; but it will be inevitable if America ſhould become flouriſhing and independent. We leave to the politicians of Europe to determine how far reaſon and juſtice and humanity will permit them to accelerate or

retard its accompliſhment. — They are to judge too whether the preſent generation in concurring towards it, will avoid more ills than they render certain to poſterity; whether it is ſtill in their power to prevent it, and whether our Miniſters, abſorbed in their little Speculations of the day, have not been too inattentive to a revolution which would ſeem to be more intereſting and critical, than any which the annals of the world can preſent us with from the time of its civilization.

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SECTION II.

Of the preſent ſtate of LEGISLATION *in Europe.*

WHATEVER influence the deſtiny of *America* may one day be expected to produce on the reſt of the globe, and eſpecially on Europe, yet theſe events may ſtill be conſidered as far diſtant. The preſent generation is pretty ſecure from evils

which ſeem only to threaten their deſcendants. But the caſe is different with Legiſlation. This is the concern of every moment, and it is hardly poſſible to view it with indifference, or to conſider, without ſhuddering, the miſtakes it may be liable to commit, or the abuſes it may be tempted to tolerate. The happineſs of every one of us, and likewiſe of our families and friends, and indeed all that is dear to us, depends on this imperious power. We ought therefore to wiſh for its being perfect. But alas! we are as yet very far, not only from this

this perfection, but from the preliminaries which lead to it. We may, perhaps, go ſo far as to ſay, that it does not even exiſt in Europe.

As to that which relates to Adminiſtration, and which determines the rights of the Sovereign and thoſe of the people, if we except *England* and *Denmark*, it is wholly unknown in every other nation. Theſe two are indeed arrived, the one by giving up to, and the other by diſputing every thing with their Kings, at leaſt, at a knowledge of what the crown is, and

how the individual is to be conſidered who wears it. In every other country nothing can be more uncertain than either of theſe.

In *France*, for inſtance, the Monarch ſtiles himſelf the Nation, the Parliaments ſtile themſelves the Nation, and ſo do the Nobility; and the Nation itſelf is unable to ſay what it is. In waiting for the clearing up of this point, every thing is confuſed, and becomes the ſubject of pretenſions and diſputes. The Royal Prerogative, inceſſantly advancing or retreating, knows

no

no limits it is unable to paſs, nor boundaries to which it may not be brought back.

It is the ſame thing in *Spain*, *Germany*, &c. where the Sovereigns have conſtantly ſome right to invade or defend: they live with their ſubjects as with an enemy, from whom every prize is lawful; they conſider the eſtabliſhment of a new impoſt as a ſpoil, and the annihilation of a privilege as a trophy. In this kind of inteſtine war which effectually roots out confidence and affection from either party, the

ſucceſs of the Prince is more diſgraceful than his defeat would be.

In matters of *Juriſprudence*, by which the lives and properties of individuals are protected, the confuſion is, if poſſible, ſtill more alarming. *Pruſſia*, *Sardinia*, and *Ruſſia* have attempted ſome improvements on this head, which do honour to their Sovereigns. Of all the other Nations, there is perhaps not one which has a Code of Laws founded on reflexion, or which is agreeable either to reaſon or humanity.

Uncouth

Uncouth and barbarous cuſtoms, founded on the capriciouſneſs of ignorance and ſtupidity, in the remote times of foedal anarchy, and altogether incompatible with the changes which have ſince taken place in ſociety; theſe are our national laws. Their irregularity and multiplicity bring them every moment into contradiction with each other, and ſtill more ſo with common ſenſe.

The confuſion is every day increaſing by the addition of new laws and the

the decifions of our courts; all which afford an ample field to the ſubterfuges of chicanery. In ſhort, the *Roman law*, or rather the extravagant compilation made under that name by a perverſe Civilian and a ſtupid Emperor having preſerved in ſome countries the authority of law, and being quoted by the practitioners of all countries, ſeems to put a finiſhing hand to this diſorder, and to render it as dangerous as it is irremediable.

If, in the matter of *puniſhments*, ſome few hands, more daring than the reſt,

reſt, have ventured to touch the ſubject of Juriſprudence, they have ſerved only to render it at once abſurd and atrocious. The *torture*, an invention which owes its origin to Republican deſpotiſm, has indeed been aboliſhed by two female Sovereigns in two of the principal dominions of our Hemiſphere: but in many other countries it ſtill continues to have its apologiſts. Notwithſtanding the luminous writings which have been publiſhed of late years on this and many other parts of our criminal laws, it preſerves almoſt in every nation its

ſcan-

ſcandalous imperfection and barbarity.

In *France*, as well as in many other parts of Europe, the proceſs in criminal matters depends on a ſingle man who informs and hears the accuſers, and who decrees againſt the priſoner; and who, though unable to take from him his property, is authorized to deprive him of the ſweets of liberty and to plunge him into a dungeon. Such proceedings, have rather the appearance of a conſpiracy between a Judge and the Witneſſes againſt an innocent man,

man, than of the inquiries of Juſtice for the conviction of a criminal.

In *England*, this inconvenience and the torture are equally unknown. But in their ſtead we meet with another which is perhaps not leſs alarming; and this is the rapidity with which the forms of Juſtice are carried on. In a ſingle day the proceſs, which is to decide on the life of an individual, is both begun and ended. In one day the Judges and Jury aſſemble, the Witneſſes are ſummoned and heard, and the Culprit is interrogated, and con-

condemned or acquitted. The whole of ſuch a tranſaction is indeed in publick, but this celerity is not the leſs ſuſpicious on that account, whether by its being prejudicial to innocence or favouring the impunity of a crime.

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SECTION III.

Of the preſent ſtate of the MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT *in Europe.*

ALEXANDER, with forty thouſand men, undertook to conquer the greateſt part of the known world, and ſucceeded in his undertaking. Five legions, which did not exceed that number of ſoldiers, compoſed the moſt powerful of the Roman armies.

There

There were indeed forty at the battle in which the virtuous *Brutus* ſealed the triumph of the cowardly *Octavius* with his blood. But this momentary effort of expiring liberty, and of deſpotiſm favoured by fortune, had no influence on the maxims of government. Till the invaſions of the barbarians, the provinces were always ſecured and protected, in the manner they had been ſubdued, by ſmall armies.

What a difference do the preſent times exhibit! There are five powers in Europe,

rope, each of which maintains a greater number of troops even in time of peace, than ever appeared under the banners of the *Cæſars* on the moſt cruel and critical occaſions. At the firſt beat of drum the quantity increaſes to a degree one can hardly venture to calculate. All this would ſeem to realize what hiſtorians relate, or what the imagination ſuppoſes of thoſe deluges of barbarians, who poured by millions into the country to which their capriciouſneſs directed them. There were maintained in Europe, during the whole of the laſt war,

more than twelve hundred thouſand men.

Theſe devouring locuſts are themſelves devoured by the train of diſeaſes induced by miſery and debauchery; and by the mode of fighting, which becomes more deſtructive in proportion as the inſtruments of deſtruction are rendered more perfect. At the cloſe of every campaign it becomes neceſſary not only to recruit, but to create anew, whole regiments; and if to theſe we join all the other calamities which are the inevitable conſequences

quences of war, ſuch as the devaſtation of the countries in which it is carried on, and likewiſe of thoſe which are ſeemingly in peace, but which ſuffer no leſs from the drain of men and money, than the others do from the carnage carried on in them; and laſtly, the deſtruction of innocence and population, which the libertiniſm of an army never fails to ſpread over a country; we ſhall then be convinced, that a ſingle period, ſuch as that from 1756 to 1762, ſwallowed up more men than would be required to people ſeveral worlds.

The privilege granted to the Sovereigns of Europe, or rather uſurped by their Miniſters, of raiſing an indefinite number of troops, is perhaps one of the moſt cruel evils that afflict our continent. To this ſource we may trace the eſtabliſhment of a Militia in ſome countries, which is a modern and tyrannical inſtitution. It forces the peaceful huſbandman from his plough, and the weak and induſtrious artiſt from his loom, and devotes them to a profeſſion which requires a ferocity of diſpoſition and great ſtrength of temperament. To the ſame ſource

likewiſe

likewiſe we may impute the inconſtancy or pride which tempts men to elude this ſpecies of ſlavery, and the pretended laws, which, conſidering as a crime the violation of an engagement extorted by force, allot the ſame puniſhment to the deſerter as to the murderer.

Let a Republic call together all her citizens to the aſſiſtance of the ſtate, and when the Sovereignty is attacked let her arm all the hands that partake of it; let her puniſh with death the traitor who, proſtituting his reputation

and conſcience, ſells his ſervices to the enemies of his country; in all this ſhe will do only what is juſt and reaſonable. The deſerter from Rome or Athens had enjoyed all the privileges againſt which he was conſpiring: he had aſſented to the law which pronounced the pain of death againſt the crime of which he was guilty, ſo that he was wounding, not only the ſtate, but his own intereſt and dignity. But the hireling whoſe ſervices are purchaſed, or the unhappy wretch whom a black billet has aſſigned over to the ſub-delegate appointed to decimate the village

village in which he lived, can have no intereſt in the diſpute they are carried forth to ſupport; and the latter has never felt any inclination to ſell either his blood or his liberty. The violence which metamorphoſes him into a warrior, depriving him of every thing and giving him nothing, ſurely cannot bind him. The law which condemns ſuch a man to be hanged or to be ſhot for deſertion, is truly an aſſaſſination.

But this is not all. Of thoſe who remain conſtantly under the banner

many will be carried off in battle, or by the mines in ſieges, or by wounds and ſickneſs in the hoſpital, and thus will be loſt to their country. They who ſurvive will perhaps become ſtill more deſtructive to it by their exiſtence. If diſcharged at the cloſe of the war they become the moſt baneful of its enemies. Juſtice finds herſelf obliged to declare war againſt them, and after having eſcaped from battle, they very often terminate their days diſgracefully at the gallows.

If,

If, inſtead of this, they are ſtill kept embodied, the imperious power of military diſcipline renders them the tyrants of their country, after they have ſerved to protect it from its rivals. A Soldier is no ſooner enliſted, and inſtructed in the manœvres of his profeſſion, than he becomes, as it were, a mere machine, and is no longer permitted to uſe even his reaſon. Much has been ſaid againſt the Monks, and they have been abuſed on every ſide. But are Soldiers leſs devoted than our Prieſts to paſſive obedience? Our Monks have, at leaſt, eaſe and opulence

opulence by way of indemnity. They are ſecure of a peaceful life and of a ſubſiſtence, of which nothing can deprive them. Nay, what is more than this, theſe pious automata ſubmit themſelves to a yoke fabricated by religion, and devote themſelves, at leaſt, to the profeſſion of peace and virtue.

But neither of theſe motives will be found to actuate the Soldier. In attaching himſelf to a military life he profeſſedly cultivates the moſt violent paſſions. His leading duty, and his greateſt merit, conſiſt in his being as deaf

deaf and as pityleſs, and as obedient as his muſket. If his commanding officer ſhould direct him to plunge his bayonet into his father's breaſt, there would be no choice leſt for him between parricide and mutiny. He would be neceſſitated to begin with the crime, and at the leaſt ſigh that might eſcape him, the iron rod of power, by which he is ſubjected, would puniſh him, not for murder, but remorſe. This is a tremendous but an indiſputable truth, on which the Sovereigns of Europe would do well to meditate. This murderous appa-

ratus

ratus is of little conſequence to them, and they are cruelly deceived, if they are taught that it is eſſential to their being either venerated or obeyed. It is to their Miniſters only that it is uſeful, becauſe as theſe enjoy only a borrowed authority, and their aim is to accumulate honors and wealth to themſelves, and to elevate their creatures at the expence of their rivals, they find themſelves unable to ſtifle complaints but by terror, or to prevent reſiſtance but by force. Battalions are therefore as eſſential to the Miniſters

Miniſters of an arbitrary government, as general warrants.

But the Prince, to whom the law ſerves for protection, and whoſe intereſt and honor are inſeparable from thoſe of the ſtate, who can have no other wiſh than that of doing good, nor any other want than that of being inſtructed, ought to be more alarmed even than his people at theſe barriers which ſeparate him from them. The example of the ancient Maſters of the world ought ſurely to impreſs thoſe Sovereigns with terror, who give,

give, with ſo much imprudence, into the luxury of ſtanding armies. When the Emperors began to have only Soldiers for their confidents, they had only enemies for ſubjects. They were able indeed to do every thing againſt the nation, but the troops were able to do every thing againſt them. The laws they had annihilated were no longer a ſecurity againſt revolt, and thoſe terrible pillars of authority imbrued the throne with blood much oftener than they defended it.

And

And what is ſtill more wonderful, theſe mercenary agents of deſtruction, have loſt as much, and perhaps more than the people, by the depravity that multiplies them. Their number, by rendering them redoubtable, ſerves likewiſe to depreciate them; and the facility with which they are procured degrades them in the eyes of their chiefs. The neceſſity of having numerous armies, has gradually given riſe to the invention and ſucceſs of two of the moſt inconceivable operations that politicians have, perhaps, ever ventured to hazard.

The

The firſt of theſe is the diminution of the pay of the Soldiery, extenuated, now-a-days, to ſuch a degree, that the moſt curious, but the moſt difficult of all the problems of oeconomy, would be to know how a ſtipendiary in uniform is able to live with his pay.

It is not that any thing has apparently been taken from the Soldier's pay; on the contrary, ſome ſteps ſeem to have been taken towards increaſing it. But by attaching themſelves to ancient denominations, whilſt the true value of money was changing;

ing; by continuing the daily pay of a Soldier at five or ſix ſols *, as in the fifteenth century, whilſt the articles of life are twenty, perhaps thirty times dearer than they were at that time: by ſupporting this trick by the reſources afforded by military diſcipline againſt the multitude it contains, Miniſters have, at length, been enabled to render the profeſſion which diſpoſes of the lives of the people, a real ſlavery, which does not even procure to its victims the means of ſupporting their own.

* Six ſols, about three pence ſterling. This is the daily pay of a French Soldier. T.

In order to form an idea of the ſituation of our Soldiers, compared with that of our predeceſſors, let us inquire what was the pay of a Soldier at ſome determinate period of hiſtory; in the reign of Lewis the XIth, for inſtance, a celebrated reign which has been ſo unjuſtly calumniated, becauſe the Sovereign himſelf was vicious.

In thoſe days, a *Bowman* received four French livres every month; his pay therefore amounted to forty-eight livres *per ann.* and with this he was obliged to ſupply himſelf with cloaths and

and arms and nouriſhment. But in the times we are ſpeaking of, a quarter of wheat ſold only at twenty ſols *, the common wine at 30 ſols, and an ell of good ordinary cloth at twenty-two or twenty-four ſols †.

The Soldier, therefore, ſuppoſing him to be a ſingle man, who drank two barrels of wine, and conſumed three quarters of wheat, and afforded himſelf a good ſuit of cloaths every

* Twenty ſols make a livre of the French money, which is equal to about ten pence half-penny, ſo that forty-eight livres are equivalent to forty ſhillings ſterling.

† See the hiſtory of the times.

year, expended on theſe articles only about a quarter of his pay. The ſurplus of thirty-ſix livres, allowing for the difference in the value of money between thoſe times and the preſent, gave him a yearly income equivalent to ſix hundred livres at this period; and with this he was enabled not only to procure all the neceſſaries of life, but even to adminiſter to his pleaſures, if he was voluptuous; or to raiſe a fund for old age, if he was prudent and oeconomical.

And

And if he was married, he was able to educate his children and to ſatisfy the little whims of his wife, who, on her ſide, by her induſtry and good management, contributed to the happineſs of the family *.

But

* At a diſtance from my cabinet, and deprived of my books and the greateſt part of my papers, I am able to quote only from memory. I am pretty clear, however, that I am not deceived on theſe points. If I make any miſtake, it can only be in miſapplying the prices of the articles I mention, but not ſo as to make any difference in the total. The inference will, at any rate, be the ſame, and it will be equally certain, that the ſituation of a Soldier in thoſe days was equivalent to one of our ſedentary revenue officers who receives an hundred piſtoles every year; and, that a ſtipendiary, in thoſe times, ſcarcely receives a tenth part of what was paid to a Satellit of Lewis the XIth.

But the ſituation of our troops at the preſent period, is very different from

I am aware that writers differ very much on this head, becauſe none of them, in my opinion, have taken the right ſteps to find out the truth. The only way to demonſtrate this matter, ſeems to me to be as follows:

The mark of ſilver, under Lewis the XIth, was valued at about ten livres. Wheat, at that time, as we have already obſerved, ſold at a livre the quarter; there were therefore ten of theſe quarters for a mark. Now-a-days the mark is valued at fifty-two livres, and the quarter of wheat at about twenty livres. There will be therefore only about two quarters and a half for a mark. Suppoſing that a Soldier at this period were to receive five marks, yet even with this advance, he would be unable to procure no more than twelve or thirteen quarters of wheat. He would ſtill be three times as poor as the Soldier of the fifteenth century.

But

from this. Their pay is conſumed by the four and twenty ounces of bread, and the eight ounces of bad meat, which are allowed them for their daily ſubſiſtence: and when to this there is added, a ſuit of coarſe cloth without ſubſtance, furniſhed by ſome miniſterial contractor, who is autho-

But it will be found that he does not receive ſo much as five marks. Five ſols *per diem* are ſcarcely equivalent to two marks; ſo that he can procure only five quarters of wheat in the year. Our Infantry have therefore only a tenth of what the Succeſſor of Charles the VIIth. allowed to his troops. The profeſſion of a Soldier was, indeed, in thoſe days, a very good one; but on the other hand, that of a Miniſter was ſomewhat leſs lucrative than it is now.

rized to cheat with impunity, they are ſuppoſed to be treated with magnificence. Hence it is, that wretchedneſs, ignominy and beggary, form the whole of their future proſpects, and, that a daily famine conſtitutes the whole of their preſent enjoyment. There are people who go ſo far as to juſtify this oeconomy by calculation. I have heard the Colonel of a regiment obſerve very coolly at table, that a Soldier having but little work to do, required but little aliment; and, that if his men had ſtrength enough to preſent themſelves properly on the parade,

rade, he was ſatisfied. This is a little in the ſtile of *Harpagon*, who thinks it needleſs to feed his horſes when they don't work.

As a proof that this inconceivable Speculation is founded on ſerious calculations, we may inſtance one of its firſt powers in Europe, which having, during the laſt war, added four ounces of rice to the daily allowance of the troops, ſuppreſſed this addition at the peace. More attention is paid to horſes: they have uniformly the ſame quantity of food, becauſe their wants are acknowledged

ledged to be always the ſame. If it ſhould be aſked, why the evidence, which has preſerved to theſe animals the integrity of their portion, has not produced the ſame effect in favour of men? the reaſon may be eaſily pointed out. It is, that however diſciplinable the former of theſe are, yet education cannot be brought to curb their ſtomachs ſo eaſily as it does their mouths or their legs; a miracle, which the greater perfection of human nature alone can enable it to accompliſh.

But

But here is another kind of Speculation, ſtill more ſtrange than the other. The vanity intereſted in commanding three hundred thouſand muſkets borne by machines in uniform, has not only led to attempt a diminution of the daily ſubſiſtence of theſe wretches, but likewiſe the value of the individual himſelf. Not contented with contracting the little pittance which is to ſupport the life of the Soldier, Miniſters are become ſtill more avaricious in the means that are to protect him from death. They have, at length, carried their refinements ſo far, as to

expoſe

expoſe him to the enemy without defence; becauſe it would be more expenſive to ſhield him with armour, than to replace him.

This is altogether a novel idea, and well deſerves to be inquired into.

The moſt pityleſs conquerors of former ages, and who were ſo prodigal of human blood, were attentive, however, to the preſervation of their Soldiers. Their heads were ſecured by caſques, and their breaſts with coats of mail. To theſe fixed ramparts there

there was added a moveable preſervative, which defended the other two: the arm, loaded with a buckler, ſerved to turn aſide the ſwords and the javelins of the enemy; and the Soldier, who returned victorious to his tent, owed his ſafety and glory to this triple defence, which had, perhaps, kept off the hand of death an hundred times in the courſe of the battle.

But ſince a ſimple province of the Roman Empire aſſembles under its banners, on the moſt trifling occaſion, more mercenaries, than that Empire ever

ever had of Citizens, coats of mail have been in diſuſe in battles and ſieges. From the moment that our modern imitators of *Salmoneus* began to deal out a thunder, which is more horrible and deſtructive than that of heaven; the unfortunate wretches, who have devoted themſelves to this infernal ſervice, have laid aſide the uſe of armour.

It has been argued, that the motives to this change were to be ſought for in the violence of the artillery. It has been ſaid, for inſtance, that caſques

and

and helmets, from the impetuoſity with which a cannon ſhot acts on the object it ſtrikes, might be rendered, not the means of defence, but of greater carnage. An infinite number of reaſonings have indeed been adopted on this ſubject, and even by military people; which would appear ſtrange, if every day's obſervation did not ſerve to convince us, that of all the arts, men generally inquire the leaſt minutely into thoſe which they practice every day.

Were we even to allow, that a cannon ball ſhould be able to ſpread the

ſplinters

ſplinters of the metal it touches, laterally, and in this manner increaſe the operation of death on every ſide; yet, this objection would not hold good in the caſe of muſquetry or of the ſword and bayonet. And even with the large artillery, this deſtructive exploſion of the caſque or helmet would never take place. If a cannon ball ſtrikes againſt a large ſtone, or a bomb ſinks into the earth by its weight and momentum, and then tears it by its exploſion, every thing within the reach of this momentary volcano is torn or deſtroyed. But the ſurface of

metal

metal not affording a brittle ſubſtance like the ſtone, or a looſe and eaſily ſeparable ſubſtance like the earth, will not be ſuſceptible of ſo dangerous an extenſion. The bullet never ſpreads the parts of the helmet it deſtroys: that part of it which it touches it carries away together with the breaſt that it covered; but as theſe deplorable fragments have neither its rapidity, nor its hardneſs or form, they are ſoon left behind, and fall at no great diſtance from the bleeding trunk to which they belonged: they can therefore not be accuſed of adding to the ravages of

the bullet, but will conſtantly weaken its momentum by their weight and reſiſtance. The nakedneſs of our armies, when they go to expoſe themſelves to death, is therefore not the fruit of Speculations founded either on reaſon or humanity.

The true motives for ſuch an oeconomy are to be ſought for in a different channel.—By increaſing the number of troops, Miniſters have gradually been enabled to expend on an entire company, only the ſame pay that was formerly required to ſupport a

ſingle

ſingle individual. The wretches who protect their maſters ill-gotten treaſures, and who are the inſtruments of his deſpotiſm, have themſelves barely a ſufficiency of bread for their ſupport. That men ſhould be ſo ill-treated, and at the ſame time ſo ſupple, is the effect of diſcipline, vanity, prejudice, and libertiniſm. But the contractors for an army will not be found to have the ſame pliability. They will never be induced to part with their copper, at the price for which a Soldier ſells himſelf: a recruit may be procured for ten crowns, but to ſupply

him with armour would be the expence of thirty. Speculative Miniſters have, therefore, made a very ſimple calculation. Finding it much cheaper to recruit and ſupport their troops than to cloath them in bronze, they adopted the oeconomy of expoſing them in a defenceleſs ſtate to the fire of the artillery. Thus they are enabled to keep up large ſtanding armies, comparatively, at a ſmall expence; and if they have any fears about the artillery, they are founded wholly on the dearneſs of ſalt petre.

The

The preceding reflections may be equally well applied to the marine. This, of all the arts which have been tranſmitted to us by the antients, has been the moſt improved by the induſtry of the Moderns. It is hardly poſſible, even for the imagination itſelf, to conceive any thing more wonderful, than the idea of a firſt rate ſhip of war conveying an army from one hemiſphere to the other, reſiſting both the ſea and the winds, vomiting out fire on every ſide, and ſpreading deſolation and death afar off even on the land.

Were we to enter into all the details of its conſtruction, and to examine all the variety of parts which ſerve at once to give lightneſs and ſtrength to ſo enormous a maſs, our admiration might lead us to conſider it rather as a preſent from the Divinity, than as the work of men's hands. But when we reflect on its deſtination, and paſſing down between the decks, obſerve the ſavage manners of the Sailors; their depravity and want of ſenſibility; the diſeaſes to which their debauchery and a ſea-faring life expoſe them; when we conſider, that of thoſe who go out

on

on the voyage, few perhaps will return home again without having experienced or occaſioned calamities which would ſeem fabulous even in romance; we ſhall then be induced to attribute this invention to ſome infernal genius; lamenting, at the ſame time, the fatality which has furniſhed men with ſo many means of deſtroying, and ſo few of preſerving themſelves.

In moſt parts of Europe, the ſame ſyſtem of oeconomy is adopted in the marine as in the army department.

The pay of a Sailor is indeed better now than it was in the days of Columbus; unlike the Soldier, he is eſſential to the peaceful operations of commerce, as well as of war; and this has given riſe to a ſort of rivalſhip between the Government and the trading part of each nation, which turns out to the advantage of the Seamen; ſo that Sailors, in general, are better paid, and better fed, than Soldiers.

But as the merchant's ſervice is much milder, and at the ſame time more

more lucrative than that of Government, Ships of war would, perhaps, never be fully equipped, if Seamen were permitted a freedom of choice in this matter. Other means have therefore been adopted: in France, the *Claſſes;* and in England, *Preſs Warrants*, are the means of procuring men for the navy.

The *Claſſes* devote to this ſervice all thoſe who have the misfortune to be born under the denomination of Sailor, within a certain diſtance from the ſea; ſo that no man can ſerve in the merchant's ſervice,

vice, who is not regiſtered in the Admiralty books: and from theſe *Claſſes* the King's ſhips are ſupplied with men, whenever there is occaſion. This method is indeed repugnant to liberty, but the *Preſs* is repugnant both to the laws and humanity.

At the bare order of the Miniſter, without notice and without ceremony, troops of armed men pour into the ſea ports of Great Britain, and ſeize on every one who has the phyſiognomy of a Sailor. This title alone ſeems to authoriſe every kind of violence.

They

They even go ſo far as to board merchant ſhips, and to carry away, publickly and by force, the whole of the equipage. The merchant, by this kind of civil war, ſees all his Speculations, and perhaps his fortune, deſtroyed. In the mean time commerce is found to languiſh, and the neceſſaries of life increaſing in price become a real tax to the people.

But this is not all. The Preſs Gangs ſometimes meet with reſiſtance, and in the frays which enſue, there are very often ſeveral perſons killed or wounded

wounded on both ſides. The lives of individuals are, in general, more ſecure in England than in any other country; but in the caſe of Preſs Gangs, murder is uſually winked at. Juſtice makes no inquiries on the ſubject: ſo that, on the borders of the Thames, the moſt uſeful members of the State may be ſaid to be excluded from the protection of the laws.

The abuſe in France, in the *Claſſes*, is neither ſo much felt nor ſo ſcandalous as this of *Preſs Warrants*. It would ſeem as if the two kingdoms, rivals

rivals in every other matter, were likewiſe diſputing which ſhould adopt the moſt barbarous method of procuring defenders to the State; and in this diſgraceful contention England has confeſſedly the ſuperiority.

SEC-

SECTION IV.

Of the ſtate of FINANCES *in Europe.*

THE augmentation of the military eſtabliſhment neceſſarily occaſions an increaſe of the taxes. The Sovereign who wiſhes to levy many troops, muſt at the ſame time find out the means of raiſing much money. The capacity of a Miniſter, now-a-days, ſeems to be meaſured by his ingenuity

ingenuity in inventing new modes of taxation; and almoſt the ſole object of debate, in the moſt auguſt counſels in Europe, is how to plunder the honeſt and induſtrious ſubject with eaſe and impunity.

This abuſe is, without doubt, a grievous one: it announces to poſterity, either a ſtate of rigorous ſlavery, or an independency which will be the fruit of many a civil commotion. But this is by no means the only thing capable of exciting our wonder on a view of this matter. A conſide-

rate

rate and impartial ſpectator will be ſtill more aſtoniſhed, when he obſerves the obſcurity of the rights on which taxation is founded, and the confuſion which prevails in this branch of Adminiſtration throughout Europe. Miniſters ſeem to acknowledge their incapacity to reform in this matter; and in two of the principal States of Europe, we ſee the National Debt augmented to ſuch a degree that if every inhabitant of thoſe ſtates were to be ſold, head by head; and the whole of their lands, acre by acre; it is very doubtful, whether their product would be

be ſufficient to liquidate the Debt to which the ſoil and its cultivators are ſubjected.

With reſpect to the obſcurity which prevails in Financing, and the weakneſs of Miniſters in ſuffering a State to be gradually undermined by it, inſtead of attempting to remedy it by regularity and oeconomy; theſe are old and almoſt incurable evils: it is a grievance which has been long felt, but in theſe times its malignity ſeems to be increaſed. The variation in the value of money, together with the in-

creaſed price of the neceſſaries of life, having diminiſhed the publick revenues: and the increaſe of pomp and luxury having, at the ſame time augmented the expences of life, it became neceſſary to find out a ſuccedaneum.

Clear, ſimple taxes, the produce and extent of which might have been eaſily ſtated, would have been too alarming to the ſubject. Were it propoſed to an individual to give up a quarter of his poſſeſſions to his Sovereign, he would conſider the propoſer as a plunderer and a tyrant. The aim

of

of Miniſters has therefore been to levy, by duties on a thouſand different articles, a ſum of money, which would terrify the people were it to be collected by a ſingle tax. The Act of Parliament by which a new tax is impoſed, ſerves to ſtifle diſcontent, and thus the pockets of the ſubject, in the courſe of every year, are inſenſibly drained of half their revenue. In this ingenious manœvre, which is ſo inſulting to the human mind, conſiſts the whole ſecret of Financing. We are told by Suetonius, that an Intendant of the Gauls under Auguſtus, per-

ceiving that the taxes were paid in his province every month, contrived to levy fourteen in the courſe of the year. By this ſingle operation he acquired a ſixteenth of the publick revenue. It would ſeem as if our modern Miniſters had followed this man's example.

But in order to render this ſubtility lucrative, it became neceſſary to ſupport it by force. This gave riſe to the invention of *Smuggling*; to the erecting it into a crime; and likewiſe

to

to the laws, which in many countries puniſh the ſmuggler with death. The pretended deſpotiſm of Aſia is a ſtranger to this ſpecies of tyranny and injuſtice; it is peculiar to thoſe people, who conſider themſelves as the moſt civilized and enlightened of the globe.

In Great Britain, indeed, the introduction of prohibited goods has never yet been conſidered as a capital offence. But as the Cuſtom-houſe officer has a right, in caſe of reſiſtance, to kill as

well as the Preſs Gangs; as the houſe of a Citizen, which in every other country is conſidered and reſpected as a ſacred aſylum, is not ſecure in this from the oppreſſive tyranny of a ſearch warrant, it would ſeem that the Engliſh can have no reaſonable claims to an exception in their favour in this matter.

It will be ſtill worſe if we examine the ſyſtem of Europe on the ſubject of the *National Debt*. The art of tranſmitting a load of this ſort from one

one generation to the other, and of adding continually to it, is an invention which is altogether due to the Moderns. It is, indeed, peculiar to the eighteenth century, and will, probably, be conſidered hereafter as one of its moſt diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics. There are few Governments, at preſent, which are not more or leſs influenced by it; but it is in France and England that its effects are the moſt felt. Suppoſing, however, the National Debt of each of theſe two States to be equal, ſtill their engage-

ments and danger will appear to be far from being the ſame.

In Great Britain, we ſhall find that the whole kingdom ſtands engaged as a ſecurity for its contracts; but this is not the caſe with France. If the latter of theſe groans under a frightful load of Debts, contracted during the two laſt reigns, the evil is the reſult of a defective Legiſlation, which ſeems to have no fixed and clear ideas of Government.

It

It is a truth, founded on received principles, and acknowledged in every country, where the crown is hereditary, and the Adminiſtration abſolute, that the reigning Prince has only a temporary intereſt in the revenues of the State. He can diſpoſe neither of the whole, nor of any of its parts; it is, or ought to be, tranſmitted entire to the next legal Succeſſor. Till the beginning of the preſent century, however, nobody had been led to inveſtigate this ſimple queſtion; becauſe, before that period, Sovereigns had ventured to borrow money only by indirect

reſt means, and with a very ſparing hand. Lewis the XIIth, and Francis the Iſt, had dared to ſell only a few poſts, and to alienate a few trifling eſtates; and in each of theſe ways the lenders of the money were thoſe who ran the greateſt riſk. Under Henry the IIId, the incroachment was more daring; but ſo far was the Body of the Nation conſidered as ſtanding engaged for the payment of the King's or the Miniſter's Debts, that the Italian Uſurers, who advanced the money, were permitted to receive the revenues of the State; not, however, as a ſecu-

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rity for their loans, but as the eaſieſt and readieſt way to reimburſe them.

The virtuous Sully, who became after a ſeries of difficulties the principal Miniſter of Henry the IVth, a Prince, by the bye, who might be ſaid to have purchaſed rather than conquered his crown, aimed at liquidating the Debts of the Sovereign in the eaſieſt manner. Under Lewis the XIIIth, and during the minority of Lewis the XIVth, employments and titles, of every kind, were diſpoſed of in the moſt diſgraceful manner; but hardly

any

any loans were made by the Sovereign, which were ſuppoſed to affect the Nation. Lewis the XIVth, when he aſſumed the reins of government, became voluptuous, ambitious, and perverſe in his operations. He was truly the firſt Sovereign in France who ventured to abuſe the confidence of the publick to a degree which has never yet been paralleled in any country.

At his death, his obligations ought to have died with him, and then the Nation would have been in ſome meaſure

meaſure relieved from the calamities under which it was groaning. But the Prince who ſucceeded him was in his infancy, and the *Regent* who enjoyed only a temporary poſſeſſion of the Sovereign authority, ſurrounded by enemies, wanting enough of reſolution to attempt a reformation of the evil; and not being aware perhaps of the principle we have juſt now eſtabliſhed, did not perceive how juſt, and humane, and uſeful, and how preferable, in every ſenſe, ſuch an operation would have been to the ſyſtem of Financing with which he

amuſed

amuſed and ruined the kingdom. He ſeemed to be of opinion that the preſent reign was anſwerable for the Debts of the preceding one, and that it was, of courſe, neceſſary either to pay them off or ſupport them.

This ſtep led to the eſtabliſhment of an axiom, of which few people in theſe times venture to ſuſpect the propriety: and this is, that no diſtinction ought to be made between the *Monarchy* and the *Monarch*. This datum conſtituted the baſis of all the operations of the reign of Lewis the XVth;

XVth; and both that Prince and his Miniſters conſidered themſelves as the abſolute maſters of the poſſeſſions of the ſubject. If we look into Hiſtory, we ſhall find no epocha in which a greater number of taxes and duties have been laid on, and with leſs formality or more deſpotiſm than in the period I allude to. Lewis the XVth went ſo far as to declare publickly, in an aſſembly which had the reputation of being a National one, that the Nation centered wholly in himſelf. Many were the Men of the Robe who heard this declaration, but not one of them

was

was ſufficiently enlightened or courageous, either then or ſince, to point out the eſſential and unalterable diſtinction which exiſts from the very nature of things between thoſe two objects. A prejudice authorized by ſuch examples, and ſo well ſupported, has therefore prevailed. The whole French Nation ſeem now to be ſeriouſly of opinion, that a King of France has as many pledges as ſubjects; and the reigning Monarch has been eaſily induced to think, that neither equity nor benevolence will permit him to ſeparate the Debts of his anceſtors from

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the Crown. Such a conduct would be commendable in a man in private life, who comes to the poſſeſſion of an eſtate incumbered with his father's Debts, and who prefers the honor of the author of his days to his own perſonal eaſe. What he gives is his own, and it is only by diminiſhing his own income and expences that he can be liberal to his father's creditors. But this is neither the ſituation nor the duty of a King. If he undertakes to pay the Debts of his Predeceſſor, he can do it only by oppreſſing his ſubjects; and his duties and engagements

to theſe ought ſurely to outweigh any private feelings for the credit of his anceſtors.

This miſtaken idea is productive of the moſt melancholy effects. Still, however, I will allow, that it does honor to the perſon who has been led to adopt it. The motive which ſerved as a pretext to it renders him reſpectable: the young Prince flatters himſelf he was fulfilling his duty, and ſatisfying the calls of piety and juſtice. But how much happier would it have been for his people, and of courſe

courſe for himſelf, if ſome bold and patriotic voice, in pointing out the truth he was ſearching after, had ventured to have ſaid to him: "Prince, "you are deſtined by Providence to "wear a crown, which is delivered to "you free and untainted. Employ "yourſelf about what is paſt only "with a view to bury it in oblivion; "and let all your future aims be to "realize the hopes with which your "virtues have inſpired your ſubjects. "Juſtice, and the laws of your coun- "try, declare you acquitted from "every pecuniary engagement con-

" tracted in the preceding reign * : You " have therefore only to endeavour, by " the oeconomy of your Adminiſtra- " tion, to render it unneceſſary for " your Succeſſor to avail himſelf of the " ſame privilege."

* I wiſh to have my meaning properly underſtood here. I allude chiefly to publick loans, &c. but I except *penſions* granted for ſervices rendered to the State, and which, of courſe, ought to be charged to the Nation; and, in my opinion, this is the only caſe in which the reigning Prince can make any engagements of this ſort, which ſhall hold good after his deceaſe. I therefore conſider it as the only exception to the rigorous equity which annihilates all the Debts of a Crown, every time it changes its poſſeſſor.

Such

Such a manœuvre, would, as I have juſt now proved, in every reſpect be well founded. It would, at any rate, be more equitable than the *nullum tempus* law, which relates to the Crown lands, and which has ever been conſidered as an indiſputable privilege of the Prince. If a Sovereign is excluded from the right of alienating the eſtates of his own family, he has ſurely a much leſs right to alienate the poſſeſſions of his ſubjects; as is evidently done by perpetuating a National Debt.

Many individuals would indeed ſuffer by ſuch a reformation; but the rigour of Juſtice would be ſoftened by the variety of political advantages that would ariſe from it. The Nation would ſoon learn to bleſs the author of it. The ſuppreſſion of oppreſſive taxes, the re-eſtabliſhment of good order, the return of plenty, and the reſtoration even of manners would be the invaluable fruits of a momentary convulſion.

Theſe good effects would be gratefully acknowledged by poſterity; for whom, by

by the increaſing load of our National Debt, we are preparing an infinite variety of evils: and were the precedent once thus firmly eſtabliſhed, that in public loans, it is the *King*, and not the *Kingdom*, who ſtands engaged, it would check the profligacy both of Kings and Miniſters. To theſe we may add another good effect, that of diminiſhing the rage for ſtock jobbing, which affords employment to ſo many ſpeculative adventurers, is ſo inimical to manners and commerce, and ſo frequently productive either of a diſgraceful bankruptcy and ruin, or of a ſud-

den and no leſs ſhameful acquiſition of fortune, both of which are equally repugnant to the good of Society in general.

In ſhort, a very intereſting difference between theſe two Speculations, is, that in the one, two ſucceſſive good reigns would reſtore the vigor of the State; and the influence of a vicious reign dying away with it, the prodigality of a deceaſed Prince would be no obſtacle to the good intentions of his Succeſſors; whereas, in theſe days, the evils of a wicked Admini-

Adminiſtration neceſſarily ſurvive it; and it is at the expence of the people that the benevolent diſpoſition of a *Titus* is enabled to pay for the diſſipation of a *Tiberius*.

Whoever will reflect impartially on this right (which does not ſeem hitherto to have been properly underſtood or attended to) of diſtinguiſhing between the Sovereign and the Crown, will perceive in it one of the moſt precious advantages of an abſolute Monarchy. It does by no means belong to thoſe States which approach

to

to the Republican form of Government, and in which the Nation really is, or is ſuppoſed to be repreſented by an aſſembly choſen by itſelf, and which of courſe votes in the name and with the conſent of the Nation; and this is one of the greateſt misfortunes of ſuch a form of Government. England, for inſtance, is at this inſtant in ſuch a ſituation. It is the people who expend the money; and it is likewiſe the people who borrow the money, and ſtand engaged for it. The creditors can have no claim on the Crown here, any more than in France; but, then in lieu

lieu of this, their claims extend to the whole Nation, which ſtands pledged in all its parts for the pecuniary engagements contracted by its Parliament.

The annihilation of the publick Debt at each ſucceſſion, would, in *France*, be a prudent, humane and legal operation; whereas in *England* it would be a diſgraceful and criminal bankruptcy; a moſt eſſential difference this, between the two Empires, and which, independent of their internal reſources, cannot fail in the end to produce a moſt tremendous one in their

their deſtiny. It would be curious to graduate the progreſs of the Two Nations on this head. If it be ſtrange that the true principles I have pointed out ſhould be ſo little known in the one, it is ſurely not leſs wonderful that ſo little pains ſhould be taken in the other, to avoid the calamities with which it is threatened.

SEC-

SECTION V.

Of Commerce.

COMMERCE, till the ſixteenth century, was held in no conſideration, eſpecially in Monarchies. It might be compared to an uſeful but neglected ſlave, who performed his functions in obſcurity and at a diſtance from the maſters of the houſe, who diſdained

diſdained even to know his phyſiognomy, though they were all of them glad to profit by his ſervices. Some of the Republics had the good ſenſe to bear with the humiliation attached to the idea of trade, in conſideration of the opulence which was likewiſe inſeparable from it.

The diſcovery of America gave riſe in ſome meaſure to a different mode of thinking on this head. The productions of the New World having become the ſource of riches to the ancient continent; the proſperity of the

the Nations of Europe has gradually been found to be dependent on their Commerce; and if this of later years has riſen in our eſteem, it is becauſe its ſervices have been more ſenſibly felt. It would ſeem indeed to have ennobled iſelf, by having, in ſome meaſure, given riſe to the laſt wars. It ſtimulated the efforts of the Engliſh, and has partaken of the ſplendor of their victories. It was impoſſible to ſee a Republic of Traders ſpreading terror amongſt the Kings of the Earth, and lording it in the two Hemiſpheres, without admiring the ſpring which had

elevated

elevated them to ſuch a height of power.

And yet it is ſo difficult to remove an ancient prejudice; or rather the wants to which the modern and unhappy military ſyſtem has ſubjected the greater part of Europe, are ſo inſatiable, that there is hardly a ſingle country from the Black Sea to the ſhores of the Baltic; or from Cadiz to St. Peterſburgh, in which Commerce is eſtimated or encouraged on the principles it ought to be. The whole of the conſideration is directed, not to the good

good of the people, but to the produce of the impoſts.

The hunger of all Governments, without exception, is ſo violent, that they do not allow time enough for the eſtabliſhment even of their factories and colonies; they aim at plucking the fruit, not from the branches, but from the roots, of the tree. Before the Merchant can be enabled to aſcertain that his Speculations will be ſucceſsful, the Finances have already taken from him a great part of his future profits. There is not an harbour in

Europe, in which Commerce, at its arrival, is not treated as an enemy: in many countries its peaceful bales are received by the bayonet: iniquitous outrage and ſcandalous extortions are the ſalutations it meets with on every frontier; and the moment a Merchant hears the *King's* name pronounced at the gate of a town, he may conſider it as an invariable prelude to an affront or a robbery. Never, from the earlieſt exiſtence of ſociety, has exceſs been extended farther in this way, that it is in theſe times. I know no Adminiſtration which is not every moment

repeating

repeating the folly related of the Miſer by Eſop, who emboweled his hen inſtead of waiting for the egg it was about to produce.

It is to no purpoſe that ſo many luminous writings have pointed out the truth on this head; or, that the general and particular intereſt ſhould join themſelves with reaſon to attack this cruel and abſurd oeconomy; it would ſeem as if Governments became more ſceptical, in proportion as the truth becomes more glaring.

Great Britain, notwithſtanding all the motives which ought to excite her to give an example of reformation and liberty in this matter, is become a pattern only of obſtinacy and ſlavery. She has neither ſuffered her prejudices to be removed by the injury this deſtructive tyranny is perpetually offering to herſelf; nor by the inefficacy of her laws againſt ſmuggling; or the fear leſt a neighbouring kingdom, throwing off the chains of habit and prejudice, ſhould open its ports, and, by giving a free reception to Commerce, become on a ſudden, without efforts and without

out wars, the general mart, and conſe-quently the firſt power of the world.

If France ſhould ever adopt ſuch a plan of policy; if her National Debt ſhould one day be annihilated, either by one bold ſtroke of a rigid and maſ-terly Miniſter; or, gradually, by a ſeries of prudent and oeconomical ma-nœuvres, and ſhe ſhould thus be ena-bled to offer an aſylum to Commerce, in all her ports free from impoſts, Great Britain will be irrecoverably loſt. She will then have no other part to take than that of plunging herſelf into

the ſea with which ſhe is ſurrounded, to avoid the ſhame of a diſaſter, which ſhe will owe only to her own obſtinacy.

Notwithſtanding theſe ſhackles, however, it muſt be confeſſed, that Commerce flouriſhes. The equality of ſervitude it experiences from one end of Europe to the other, is almoſt equivalent, at leaſt with reſpect to us, to liberty. As nobody ſeems to have an idea of the ſucceſs which would be the effect of independency, its preſent ſituation is conſidered as a proſperous one. If our warring Merchants have

pillaged

pillaged the Indies, they have enriched Europe. Induſtry, notwithſtanding theſe obſtacles, has made ſome happy efforts towards improvement. Different branches of manufacture have paſſed from one country to another, and every day ſerves for the eſtabliſhment of new ones.

In theſe obſervations on the characteriſtics of the preſent century, it would be unpardonable to paſs over in ſilence a ſpecies of traffic abſolutely unknown till now, and which will probably not become frequent. I allude

to the treaty concluded between Great Britain and ſome of the German Princes for a ſupply of troops to act againſt the Americans. Poſterity will not fail to conſider this as one of the memorable events of the eighteenth century.

There are certainly no reproaches due to Great Britain on this ſubject. In want of Soldiers, and finding it more difficult to raiſe troops at home, than the means of ſupporting them, ſhe readily purchaſes thoſe who are ready to exchange their arms and their blood

blood for money. This is by no means a new practice. It has been frequently adopted by the Trading Republics; as Tyre, Carthage, and Venice; nor were they blameable for such an expedient, at leaſt on received principles. Very rarely did they derive from thoſe mercenaries the advantages they expected. The minds which their money alone had procured to them, were incapable either of intrepidity in danger, or of fidelity in defeat. Still, however, if the manœuvre was imprudent on the ſide of politics,

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it could afford nothing criminal on that of morality.

In treaties of this ſort each Soldier had his ſhare of the arrangement which attached him to a new ſervice. He diſpoſed of himſelf freely and voluntarily, and in this manner incorporated himſelf, as it were, with the Nation he was come to defend. This gave him a kind of character which authorized him to kill, or to be killed, legitimately. The enemy to whom he was oppoſed had no reaſon to complain that ſlaves had been purchaſed

to

to bring men to ſubjection. The freedom which preſided at the contract enobled and legitimated what, without it, would have been odious and unjuſt.

We have even ſeen, and without ſcandal, people, who had no ſhare in a diſpute, take part in it as *Allies*, and in quality of *Auxiliaries*, ſhed either their own blood, or that of a Nation from whom they had received neither injury nor inſult. But in theſe caſes there was, at leaſt, a ſpecies of fraternity which had influenced their conduct.

duct. They expected to have the ſame aſſiſtance in return whenever they required it. The Prince, who was at their head, did not ſpeculate on their death, to enrich himſelf, after having bartered away their lives.

The Duke of Lorraine, in the laſt century; the Duke of Veymar, after the death of Guſtavus Adolphus; and the warlike Biſhop of Munſter, in leading their troops wherever they were called by ſubſidies, had however ſome honeſt and honorable pretexts to cover this intereſted complaiſance.

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In ſhort, if the cuſtom has prevailed amongſt the Swiſs, a nation ſo wiſe by the bye in other reſpects; ſo reſpectable, ſo mild, ſo averſe to war on their own account, of devoting themſelves to a life of warfare for other powers, and of examining, in theſe bloody diſcuſſions, only the ſubſidy with which they are tempted; yet they have the plea of very old and ſteady engagements to juſtify this ſeeming impropriety. Their regiments have been long included in the military eſtabliſhment of the Governments they ſerve. It is not a ſale made for the moment,

and

and to the profits of which the nation ſacrifices a part of its ſubjects. Whereas in the preſent inſtance, the Germans tranſported to America are truly objects of traffick. Neither the Soldiers, nor their Maſters, can have any intereſt either in the ſubmiſſion of the Colonies, or in the proſperity of Great Britain. There are no motives of friendly alliance to induce them to croſs the ſeas. They are ſent over by contract, and are as much a part of the cargo as the oxen that are tranſported with them. If they are carried over alive, and are not ſalted down to

avoid

avoid the expences of nouriſhment, it is becauſe their arms are more wanted than their fleſh.

And what is ſtill more inconceivable in this ſpecies of Commerce is, that their old maſters ſeem to be more intereſted in their periſhing, than the enemies they are ſent to attack. The Americans gain by their death, only the diminution of the Engliſh army; but the German Princes, who receive a premium for each head of human cattle they ſend out of their dominions, have likewiſe ſtipulated an indemnity

for

for all that do not return: and this price of blood, this compenſation for the lives of ſo many wretches, is intended neither for the widows nor the children of the deceaſed: it is paid into the hands of the Trader, and goes into the ſame coffers with the produce of the firſt ſale.—The tyrants of *Angola* and *Juida* live by a ſimilar Commerce; but this uſurious refinement is ſtill unknown to them.

This iniquitous contract is not only repugnant to the laws of morality, and appears ſcandalous and criminal when

when conſidered on the ſide of juſtice and humanity, but is even contrary to the principles of ſound politics. All theſe Princes define *Liberty* to be the preſervation of their privileges; and all of them acknowledge their leading intereſt to be in the continuance of the foedal anarchy to which they owe their power; and perhaps, it is good, for the repoſe of the reſt of Europe, that this abſurd and barbarous form of Government ſhould not be too ſoon deſtroyed in the vaſt country which languiſhes under it: But they do not perceive, that if any particular ma-

nœuvre can accelerate its abolition, it is the ſale, of ſo many *White Negroes*, by which they depopulate their dominions.

It was after the drainage of Europe by the *Cruſades*, that its Kings were enabled, with ſo much facility, to elevate themſelves above their Peers. The Ducal Crowns, &c. having loſt their ſupport, in thoſe extravagant and bloody expeditions, were no longer able to oppoſe the aſcendency of Royalty. The ſubjects, trampled on by the ruinous magnificence of ſo many petty

petty tyrants, were flattered with the hopes of finding ſecurity and repoſe under one.

Who knows whether the ſame thing may not ſoon happen in Germany; and whether one or all of the Three Powers which made ſo eaſy a prey of Poland, may not be tempted to a partition of the Empire, the conqueſt of which will be the more eaſy in proportion as it is drained of its troops. The indignation which muſt be felt by ſubjects who ſee themſelves bartered away to the higheſt bidder, would

ſurely

ſurely lead them willingly to accept the protection of a powerful Prince. The Ghoſts of their unfortunate brethren, wandering on the ſhores of America, will be no protection to the Tyrants who have ſacrificed them to their avarice and ambition; and the Guineas with which the latter ſhall have increaſed their treaſures, will be no ſecurity againſt an invaſion in which ingenuity will be ſeconded by force, and the illegality of an uſurpation obviated by the general aſſent of the people.

FINIS.